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CUPID AND PSYCHE

By
JOHN JAY CHAPMAN



NEW YORK
LAURENCE J. GOMME
1916



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CUPID AND PSYCHE

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Published June, 1916

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The play was first performed at the fiftieth anniversary of the Yale Art School, June 16-19, 1916, under the supervision of Mr. William Sergeant Kendall, Dean of the Art School, and the management of Mr. J. R. Crawford.

Music by Horatio Parker.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CUPID AND PSYCHE	I
LAFAYETTE	55
ROMULUS AND REMUS	69

ERRATUM

IN THE CAST

Cupid—Master Reggie Sheffield

should read

Cupid—Master Kingdon Brown

CAST

- VENUS—Miss S. Whitney.
CUPID—Master Reggie Sheffield.
PSYCHE—Miss E. Kendall.
KING AGATHON—Mr. Loomis Havemeyer.
QUEEN ARETE—Miss Walker.
MEROË—Miss E. Carmalt.
AEON—Mr. J. Downes.
PANTHIA—Mrs. Leonard Daggett.
PODAGRA—Mr. J. Peltz.
FOTIS—Mrs. C. Morris.
ZEPHYR—Miss G. Linnell.
CALCHAS—Mr. T. G. Wright.
GLOW-WORM—Mr. L. W. Dodd.
PAN—Mr. E. E. Paramore, Jr.
JUPITER—Mr. F. Markoe.
JUNO—Mrs. E. B. Reed.
MINERVA—Mrs. H. S. Canby.
MERCURY—Mr. H. Vreeland.
CERES—Mrs. M. Miller.
HYMEN—Mrs. Minott Osborn.
NYMPHS—Miss Sanderson, Miss Parker, Miss Sargent, Miss Williams, Miss Hotchkiss.
PRIESTESS—Mrs. T. G. Wright.

ATTENDANTS, PAGES, SATYRS, etc.
THE COURT OF LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT, by
Ladies and Gentlemen of New Haven.

STAFF FOR THE PRODUCTION

- CHAIRMAN—Mr. F. J. Walls.
COLOR—Miss Christine Herter.
MISTRESS OF THE WARDROBE—Miss G. Linnell.
PROPERTIES—The Yale Art School.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

VENUS.

CUPID.

PSYCHE.

KING AGATHON, father to Meroë, Panthia and Psyche.

QUEEN ARETE, their mother.

AEON, a decrepit old noble.

MEROË, wife of Aeon.

PODAGRA, a dissipated young noble.

PANTHIA, wife of Podagra.

FOTIS, maid servant of Venus.

ZEPHYR, maid servant in Cupid's Palace.

CALCHAS, a soothsayer.

GLOW-WORM, THE HUNCHBACK, WATCHMAN IN
KING AEON'S PALACE.

GOD, GODDESSES, NYMPHS, etc.

SCENE: *Caria*.

The costumes and decorations should be Pompeian.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

ACT I

SCENE I. VENUS *at her toilet.*

VENUS.

Give me the stick of amber and the tongs.
Fotis, my yellow hair has lost its sheen.
Quick, the Arabian drops! The ruby's light
Dies on the rosy petal of my lip.
I'm old, my Fotis, and the clouded pearls
Hang in my ears like bells beneath the surge
That tell the rocks of time. O for that day
When o'er the sea-salt billows' dancing spray
I sped to Cnidus, in my pearly wain,
With all of Nereus' daughters in my train,
And troops of Tritons furrowing the main.
Old Neptune with his azure-colored beard
Guided the joyous chorus as he steered,
And ocean's lackeys swam upon the swell;
One softly sounding his melodious shell,
One with a floating silken canopy
Protects my infant freshness from the sky,
And one with dripping seaweed on his breast
Holding a mirror in his bronzen fist,
And leaping like a dolphin through the press,
Shews new-born deity her loveliness.

[FOTIS *hands a mirror.*

CUPID AND PSYCHE

VENUS.

Love-worn and cavernous!

FOTIS.

Your brilliancy
Glow as before, immortal. 'Tis not that.

[FOTIS *kneels and places her hands on*
VENUS' knees, looking at her intently.

Madam, the liquid dusk beneath the eye
Of some dark beauty shades your firmament.
You're jealous, Madam.

VENUS.

Where is my boy?

FOTIS.

Asleep:

His golden head is pillowed on the arm
That guards his precious bow; and all the shafts
Are spilled about the crib. I fear to tread
The threshold of the purple nursery.

VENUS.

Fetch him this instant; I have work for him.

FOTIS.

I'd liefer fetch a nettle!

[*Goes to the wing and calls:*
Master Cupid, Sir, Lord Cupid!

[CUPID *appears at the other door with the*
sword of Mars in both hands and his
bow and quiver slung on his back.

CUPID.

Fotis, you rat-trap, I was dreaming of you. The
hunchback loves thee!

FOTIS.

Ah, indeed! who told you that?

CUPID AND PSYCHE

CUPID.

Diophanes, the Chaldean, read it to me out of his book of magic. Besides, I saw him kiss thee in the scaldatorium——

FOTIS.

Scaldatorium yourself, Master Cupid!

CUPID. [*Recites.*]

Cupid's coming,—maids, beware!
Fold your samplers, smooth your hair,
Peep in the glass, and in your bosom
Set a twig of apple-blossom.
Hark, his step is on the stair!
See his flame is in the air!
Cupid's coming.

VENUS.

Very charming, you pink rascal! My rosy chub-face! Throw down that sword and kiss me. Your eyes are dreaming still,—Kitten!

CUPID.

Kittens have claws——

[*To* FOTIS.

Get me a cream-puff on a plantain leaf, for breakfast; and rose-petals with the dew on them. Shake them not, you cattermole! Bring them standing.

Exit FOTIS

VENUS.

Ah, angel, embrace me.

CUPID.

Let me finish first—One word more for young ladies.

[*Recites.*

Cupid shot a bolt and fled
Ere the maid could turn her head

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Or her swimming eyes could see
What had done her injury.
(Maids, to you, to you!)
While she knew not that she bled
Her dainty kerchief streaked with red
Showed his aim was true.

VENUS.

While love lives all is left us. Throw your young
arms round Mother's neck—[*he embraces her*] My
fiery-headed wonder. [*Screams.*] Ah, Mars! He's
pricked me! Off, you heartless bee! To sting
Mamma——!

CUPID.

In Venus' blood are Cupid's arrows dipt
And from her eyes the dewy poison dript.

VENUS.

My golden joy! Come, wilt thou serve me—wilt
thou errand me?

CUPID.

Perhaps——

VENUS.

Wilt thou plant a shaft in one cold virgin's breast
for me?

CUPID.

Perhaps——

VENUS.

Her name is Psyche, and her mind a state
Rebellious to my rule,—she will not wed.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

In loveliness she is mine enemy;
And, in the growing godhead of her scorn
For love's religion, she endangers mine.
"A Virgin Venus! Psyche, the new Saint!"
The people cry; and build her painted shrines;
And all Ionia flocks to the new rites
And sets her image in its atria.
My statues are defaced, my cushioned seats
Are trampled with the rabble's miry feet,
They call me—horrid names.

CUPID. [*Mocking.*]
'Tis very sad.

VENUS.
I, the great mother of the Universe,
To be thus flouted for a chilly maid
Cold as a moonbeam!

CUPID.
Ay, 'tis sad, Mother—It would mean,—it *might*
mean,—the end of the earth.
*[He takes a golden apple from a table and
hands it to her.]*

VENUS.
What's that?

CUPID.
The apple Paris gave you on Mount Ida.

VENUS.
Wilt thou then destroy her?

CUPID.
Juno might help——

CUPID AND PSYCHE

VENUS.

Take this arrow, sir,
The sharpest in love's quiver. Drive it home
Into her icy bosom. Let her pant
With love for some vile monster of the field,
A half-thing centaur, or some child of Pan
With goat's legs,—and a black shaggy beard
Like bushes on Parnassus.

CUPID.

Mother, you have a happy disposition,
You love this girl.

VENUS.

Apollo's oracle
Has promised me his aid.

CUPID.

So have not I! Yet, mother mine,
More things occur by hap than by design.
[Kisses her on the forehead.]
Enter FOTIS

FOTIS.

Your lordship's breakfast.

CUPID.

Minx! Set it down.

[FOTIS shows a disposition not to approach CUPID too closely. She sets a small tray of fruit and flowers on a little triangular table. CUPID sits, rests his quiver on his chair's edge.]

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Get me my turquoise cup, the robin's egg,
And fill it with nectar.

*[Threatens FOTIS with an arrow which he
grasps by the middle in his closed fist.*

O you jades, you jades!

*[VENUS looks at him with dotting adora-
tion.*

Exit FOTIS

CURTAIN

ACT I

SCENE II. *A remote valley amid mountain tops.
In the left centre towards the back, a tomb.
Enter a funeral procession bearing torches.*
KING AGATHON, QUEEN ARETE, PSYCHE,
AEON and MEROË, PODAGRA and PANTHIA,
CALCHAS, the soothsayer, other lords and attendants. *The time is sunset.*

KING.

My lords, to tell the business of our state
My voice scarce breaks its way.

[*To an attendant*
Stand by the Queen!

Our youngest daughter, Psyche, from her birth
Walked in the half-light of some influence
That shook our realm with new divinity.
Yea, from afar came pilgrims to her shrine
While she, a sweet and quiet child, grew up—
That all who saw her loved her for herself;
I most,—who now expose her to the sky.
For now,—a mystery:—Her sisters twain
Were early matched in royal marriages,
But she rejected Hymen. In her band
Of worshippers were lovers not a few.
But she rebuked them, glancing up to heaven
In seeming dedication to some god.
Feared by this portent, to the oracle
I sent the deepest wizard of my realm;
Who from Apollo's lip took down the doom.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Calchas, by your allegiance to the god,
And by the trembling horrors of the night,
I charge thee speak the truth.

CALCHAS.

It is a message from the god to thee
Which from my waxen tablet I will read.

[*Reads.*

Thus commands the God of Day
Strive not: question not: obey.

Let a funeral be dressed,
Be all the pomp of Death expressed.
In the distant mountain shade
Where the crags of amethyst
Rear their purple palisade
O'er the dreamy river-mist;
Let the smoky torches stand
Where the mystic child is laid.
For the bridegroom is at hand,
And a snake doth claim the maid.
Leave her on the mountain side,
Psyche is the serpent's bride.

Genius of all space and time,
He doth creep and fly and climb
With his claws and with his wings;
In the ether, in the slime,
In the oak and in the willow,
Coiling by the peasant's pillow,
Sleeping in the heart of kings.
Zeus himself hath known the pang
And the poison in his fang;
And the Stygian billows shrink
When they feel him on the brink:
Livid, brutish and sublime,
He the holy maid hath spied.
Psyche is the serpent's bride.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Thus commands the God of Day
Strive not: question not: obey.

KING.

Sayst thou a dragon must possess my child?
Lives not some kinder meaning in the doom?
The gods are jugglers, and their blest intent
Is oft expressed in seeming cruelty.

CALCHAS.

Not here, not here, my lord! The Fane of Hymen,
Which for three years with ivy was o'ergrown,
Hath burst its portal ope, and Venus' doves,
That late were sickly, coo vociferously,
And preen themselves at cockcrow. All is well.

KING.

Daughters, what say ye? Meroë, speak thou.

MEROË.

Good sir, I ever hold the married life
Is woman's duty. When my Aeon sued
I, at your bidding, seized him as a man.
He is not young, but good; I sought no saint
Nor waited for a god.

AEON. [*Kissing his hand to her gallantly.*]
Thank you, my love.

MEROË.

This peevish child
Has drawn some ambient serpent from the sky
Through her nun's watching.

[*To PSYCHE.*

Sister, see you now,
How often have I warned you to be kind!
When Lycidas would strum upon his lute
Not she! When Phaedo brought his hunting-
dogs—

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Tears in his eyes to get a word from her,—
Not Psyche! With a glance of reverence
She swept him from her path.
What can we do?
A black miasma hangs o'er every land
When maidens will not wed. Had mother, now——

KING.

Enough, enough. Thy mind is personal
And hurts my sorrow. Panthia, speak thou.
Thou art a sorceress and should'st be wise.

PANTHIA.

My answer is my husband. Lo, the man!
Ill, crabbed, ugly, walking with a cane
Whose knob of gold proclaims his excellence.
Crowned with a Lydian title, old as Thebes,
And crusted with heroic ancestry
Till scarce you see his eyes. A husband, sir,
My husband is my answer.

PODAGRA.

Bravo, Panthia!

*[He taps his left palm with the closed
fingers of his right hand.]*

Faith, she's a Trojan mouser!

PANTHIA.

Had this patch
Of seeming innocence with elfin eye
Veiled like an insect's, purblind as a moth
That flits in twilight musings, owned a heart,
She soon had found a mate. Now flutters she
'Twixt earth and heaven in a star-fed dream,
And draws a qualm on us. The god is right.
And right religion is a sterling good,
And must be practiced.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

KING.

Mother, speak thou next.

QUEEN.

I cannot speak. A pallor's over me.
The child subdues me. If her spirit's reach
Hath touched Olympus, Zeus will draw her up.

KING.

Psyche, speak thou.

PSYCHE.

It is Apollo's voice and I do trust it.

KING.

O blessed Psyche! Faith that breaks the hearts
Of them that have it not! I do thy will
And not the oracle's. I, thy acolyte,—
Follow thy pretty foot-prints up the rock,
To thine hymeneal tomb.

[*To the attendant.*

Let torches flame

And be a dirge low-chanted through the grove.

[*Music.* PSYCHE takes a fond adieu of each
of her family in turn, the sisters
treating her somewhat distantly. She
ascends the tomb.]

DIRGE.

On the tomb must Psyche lie,
Raised upon a living stone,
Brave the blackness of the sky,
Meet the might of Fate alone.

On her gently-heaving breast
Closed her marble hands must lie;
Now her spirit is at rest,
Psyche ever sought the sky.

Zephyrs, wandering through the night,
With your tender finger-tips

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Touch the eyes that burn so bright,
Kiss the closed and silent lips.

Lead the creeping clouds aside
Till the star-lit deeps appear;
They shall shine upon the bride
Through the azure atmosphere.

Hallowed radiance shall fall
On the virgin's bier and pall
When the spangled beams above her
Show her the appointed lover—
Draw the blessed pair on high,
Psyche ever sought the sky.
[*The dirge turns to a dead march. Exit in
sad procession all but PSYCHE. Silence.*
Enter CUPID

CUPID.

A long ride on a tired rainbow to a proud beauty's funeral. This should be the spot. Cypresses here, roses there. And yonder the small shrine of some great deity. [*Approaching a niche.*] Venus Victrix. Ah, ah! "Venus Victorious." That has often meant the hair-brush to me. Safe! She's not here. But I will offer a wreath and say a prayer to her Divinity.

[*Hangs a wreath against the fane. Kneels.*
Mother, hear my prayer, I say,
Cupid bows him to thy sway:
Cupid kneels in blessed hour,
Lauds thy power;
Lifts his little hands to say
Keep away!
Darling mother, stay away!
[*Looks about; tiptoes about, sees the tomb.*

CUPID AND PSYCHE

CUPID.

Here is some ancient sculptured sepulchre
On which the artist graved a nymph asleep
In breathing marble. Genius throws its heart
On rich men's coffins. In this burial grove
Great heiresses erect their monuments,
And my fierce virgin is exposèd here,
Living among the dead.

[*Takes an arrow from his quiver and fits it
to the bow.*

I'll drive a shaft,
If I can find a maid to merit it.
These cruel monsters must not have their will.

[*He starts.*

What wind could lift that marble drapery?
And, hist! the hand doth move. 'Tis she, my
quarry!—

Flash! and my arrow shivers through her soul,
My toes through the tree tops.

[*Observes her more closely.*

What an earnest brow,
Steep and yet dulcet,—a dark symphony.
This is no vixen, but a shepherdess
That guards a flock of dreams.

Whom should she love?

Some giddy lad—like me—some trifling Jack,
Or cart-boy.

Nay, I'll hide myself
Lest she should wake. I'll walk invisible
And gloat upon the magic of her sleep.
Ah, could I step within that spirit's beam,
Become a daring figure in her dream,
I'd lay my bow aside for centuries,
To sit against her couch.

[*Lays down his bow and sits by the tomb.*

Recites.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Psyche slept within the cell
Of a deep enchanted well,
Where the stars came peeping;
 Cupid, at the brink,
 Stopped to take a drink
And sees her sleeping.

Down he dived and deep he sank
Past the dripping mosses dank
Where the stars came peeping;
 Kissed her chestnut hair,
 Vanished through the air
And left her sleeping.

PSYCHE.

A sound of wings! The serpent steers his flights
Across Orion's belt. O starry field
Where stand the ancient sentinels of night,
Send me some shield;
Protect a virgin in her helpless plight
Who knows not how to strive nor how to yield,
Give her some armor bright,
Some key to love's o'er-mastering mystery;
 Or kill me quite
And tomb me in the arms of stainless death.

CUPID. [*To PSYCHE.*]

He that approaches is invisible.

PSYCHE. [*Sitting up.*]

Where?

CUPID.

In the dim waste and ocean of the sky
Swims Cupid. Yet he is an earth-born wight.

PSYCHE.

Where?

CUPID AND PSYCHE

CUPID.

In the target of thy blazing eye,
Yet blank as space ere Chaos shuffled in
To thy perceiving.

PSYCHE.

Will he harm me, then?

CUPID.

Ay, as the sun the earliest violet,
With warmth invisible.

PSYCHE.

O hidden love,
Psyche hath known thee ever.

CUPID.

By mine eyes
Which mother Venus scarfs to keep me young,
I am thy love, the dragon of thy dream,
Sent by the gods to waft thee to a home
Where walls of agate studded o'er with gems
Reflect the dyes of Persian needlework;
And crystals gleam on slabs of porphyry,
And winds in livery do the housewifery,
And columns keep a watch o'er leafy lawns,
Where sulky breezes in the winking dusk
Tiptoe across Aeolian instruments
Melodiously attuned. Their lord am I,
Who in the virgin palace of thy mind
Reigned ever, Psyche. Leave thy chrysalis
And flutter in the kingdom of the trees.
I am thy husband.

PSYCHE.

Shall I not see him?

CUPID AND PSYCHE

CUPID.

That would ruin us.
A random wanton boy, condemned to live
At random and a wanton, would be all
Thine eye could fasten on, a ruddy boy
Such as the sweating hay-field shows in June,
A hoyden romper.

[He kneels before PSYCHE, who has descended from the tomb during his speech. She stares, extends her hands and touches both sides of his bushy head with her finger-tips.]

PSYCHE.

But thou art young!

CUPID.
Kneeling, of course, Minerva! I am shod.
With wings like Mercury.

PSYCHE.

Thy crispèd head
Is warm and prickly.

[Rises.]

CUPID.

'Tis a chestnut-burr,
And I a spreading tree to shade thy life.

PSYCHE.

Thou art some monarch, then, but in disguise?

CUPID.

Disguise, dear love, is Cupid's uniform,
His monarchy is Life.

PSYCHE.

May I not see thee ever? Not at eve,
When lovers walk in shadow? Not at dawn,
When the vermilion ray of Phœbus dyes

CUPID AND PSYCHE

The sleeping lover's cheek? Must I forego
The very eye of life, not *see* my love?

CUPID.

'Tis the hard law; for once you eyed my shape
Our bliss would vanish. I should flee away:
One look would be thy last.

PSYCHE.

I take thee, then,
Unseen, my Bridegroom.

CUPID.

'Tis a name
That suits me well. Come, sylvan trumpeters,
Assemble every denizen of the glade.

Here about the empty tomb
Let fays and spirits promptly come;
Flocking elves and naiads dancing
Interlaced with satyrs prancing,
Weave a merry chorusing.
Cupid and Psyche in the ring
With jocund elbow and with reel
Shall play the hub to Hymen's wheel.
Hymen, Hymen, come!

Enter HYMEN, followed by PAN, CERES and a
troop of nymphs and satyrs.

PSYCHE.

Apolló guide us, here be goatish shapes!

CUPID.

The woodland minstrelsy with trembling pipe
Hymns our betrothal. Come, Hymen, to your task!
[*Procession, dance and tableau. The Betrothal.*]

ACT II

SCENE I. *A room in the King's Palace. A table with wine cups, jars, flowers, etc. It is early morning, and the disorder of flowers, wreaths, and wine-jars shows that the night has been spent in a classic drinking bout.*

AEON and PODAGRA.

SONG

The scattered rose leaves lie about,
The yellow tapers fade and die.
Wine boy! the cask of night is out,—
And morning's in the sky.
All night the cups their course have run—
Bring me a jar to greet the sun:
Bring wine!

With silver flutes in every key
Musicians warble, pipe and play;
The thrush from out the hawthorn tree,
The sparrow from the spray;
With mingling tunes and magic words—
Bring me a jar to greet the birds:
Bring wine!

PODAGRA.

Come, now, dear Aeon, shall we go sleep, or shall we drive sorrow about the garden, with roses crowned? It has taken all these jugs of Chian to keep me listening to your thieves' tales of Troy divine.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

AEON.

We are nearing the end of the good wine. What shall we do then?

PODAGRA.

Buy more. There's the King's treasure.

AEON.

We're nearing the bottom of the King's treasure-chest.

PODAGRA.

What!

AEON.

All the gold is gone. Only silver of Antioch! We shall have very few more carouses, brother-in-law.

PODAGRA.

Horrors! To think I dropped my last talent at a cock-fight at the festival yesterday. But we can always borrow.

PODAGRA.

Yes, if we could only find someone who doesn't know us, brother. Let me see,—Our new brother-in-law, Psyche's husband!

AEON.

But *we* don't know *him*, brother. He's a mystery.

PODAGRA.

He's a rich mystery: he sends these presents. All these statues and gold boxes and bales of precious wares.

AEON.

But who *is* he? Where does he live?

CUPID AND PSYCHE

PODAGRA.

He must live somewhere and in a great lovely place, and he is surely one of the princes of the earth. Besides, he loves us, or why should he send these gifts? We must find him out, and borrow money of him.

AEON.

Your wife Panthia's a sorceress who can find out anything.

PODAGRA.

Not for the world! She would turn us both into weasels. She spends all night over her spells and her cookeries. Hist! I hear someone. It's Meroë.

AEON.

My wife? I'll walk on the terrace. She's been out of temper this twelvemonth, ever since the good news came that Psyche was happy.

PODAGRA.

A coward, brother?

[PODAGRA *is going out, but is stopped by*
MEROË'S *speech.*

MEROË.

Ye swilled and idle wassail-sipping fools
Who soil the morning with the fumes of wine
And steal a living, like old miscreants
At cellar windows, royal pilferers
Who do disgrace the household of a king,
What plot ye here?

AEON. [*Nervously.*]

My love, we plotted nothing.

PODAGRA.

We spoke of Psyche and her husband-prince.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

MEROË.

The serpent, mean you?

PODRAGA.

Ay, but he is rich.

A prince,—this unknown husband is a prince,
Who sends these lumps of lapislazuli,
Amber and silk. No month but gifts arrive.

MEROË.

To flout me, Psyche sends them. She is rich.
Her husband is a monarch, handsome, young;
Mine is an old, dishonest, drunken beggar.

AEON.

I'll walk awhile on the terrace. I plotted nothing,
my love.

*[She stops AEON with a gesture, and
speaks to PODAGRA.]*

MEROË.

Thee will I talk with: thou hast hit my thought.
The presents come at night, and are thrown in
Seemingly by the wind. Behind this wind
Lies magic.

PODAGRA.

Then let Panthia cope with it.

MEROË.

She does: for now within her charms she holds
The hunchback, Glow-worm, watchman to our
house;

'Tis he, and he alone, has seen them come;
But in his drowsy brain no reason swims.
Our Glow-worm is half goblin and half slave,
And dreams within that fairy wilderness
Where all things meet.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

PODAGRA.

Where is this inquest held?

MEROË.

In Panthia's cave.

PODAGRA.

On tiptoe then! Advance and lead us there.

Exeunt severally.

ACT II

SCENE II. *The Cave of PANTHIA. She is at work over an incantation, and arranges her apparatus. A steaming tripod is before her. Glow-worm sits coiled and drowsy under her spells.*

PANTHIA.

Sound, katydids, your softest tremolo
And let the treble crickets to his ears
Play the first stave of evening's overture.

[*Music. Enter at the back MEROË.*]

PANTHIA. [*To MEROË.*]

Hush! He is in the snare. Speak low, speak low.
Since I have seen thee I have mighty news.
Our sister's husband is the God of Love!

MEROË.

What! Would no mortal do? The God of Love!

PANTHIA.

See what the carrier of the setting sun
Dropped me from Paphos.

[*Reads a paper.*]

PROCLAMATION.

I, Venus, send this greeting to all the witches in Lydia. My snub-nosed boy, Cupid, is lost. I sent him to destroy the new goddess, Psyche, and the twain have vanished in a rolling cloud. The silly maid knows not who her lover is, and she cannot

CUPID AND PSYCHE

see him. If she shall once look upon him I shall triumph over both.

When they are found, cast the spell of Venus upon Psyche and bid her hold a lamp at midnight above her sleeping husband.

Ride—ride—ride. Find—find—find!

Venus Victrix.

MEROË.

Where are the runaways?

PANTHIA.

The mind that knows
Lies dreaming in yon stupefied cocoon.

MEROË.

Our servant Glow-worm?

PANTHIA.

Yes, the watching worm
Has seen Dan Cupid's servants come and go
Bringing the presents.

Enter on tiptoe AEON and PODAGRA

What! must these shallow swaggerers assist
At Hecate's holy mysteries?

[*To them.*]

Beware! Silence!

A word will ruin all my charms.

AEON. [*In a whisper to* PODRAGA.]

Shade him, bedew him! He's uncoiling. See'st thou the horrible, hairy fuzz of the monster? Lord, how his smoky eyes fright me; and his feelers wave at us like crawfish in a dream.

PANTHIA.

Silence! Let no one question him but me.
I know his language.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

GLOW-WORM.

Darkness.

PANTHIA. [*Recites charm.*]

When by the Lydian palace gate
The trooping shadows congregate,
Servant-goblins, fairy-grooms,
Horsemen from imperial stables,
Valets hot from gilded rooms,
Trenchermen from royal tables,
Housemaids, idle as their brooms,
Whisper, gossip, sip and revel,
Clink and chatter through the glooms,
Flirt and play the merry devil;
While athwart the furtive throng
Broken music from on high,—
Where the snoring princes lie,—
Breathes a burden to their song,
Such joys amid the falling dews
Glow-worm's somber lamp reviews.

PANTHIA. [*To GLOW-WORM.*]

Saw'st thou, Glow-worm, darkly-bright
Messengers in the moony light,
Post boys running, and postilions
Speeding on the wings of night?

GLOW-WORM.

[*After a pause, raising his head, dreamily.*]

Zephyr taps but never knocks,
Zephyr sweeps but never lingers,
Hiding in her taper fingers
Many an alabaster box.

PANTHIA.

Ha! Zephyr! [*To the rest.*] He speaks the name
Zephyr. Zephyr is a servant of the young god and
runs his errands. She stole after the lovers to be
their slave. [*To GLOW-WORM.*] Who is Zephyr?

CUPID AND PSYCHE

GLOW-WORM.

Handmaid to all heavenly pleasures,
Throne-girl to Queen Psyche's state.
Nimble Zephyr heaves 'the treasures
At our shining marble gate.

PODAGRA.

Ask him how to get there. Let him tell the
itinerary.

MEROË.

Ask him how we can visit our sister.

PANTHIA.

Sister Psyche, shining Queen—
We would visit her demesne.

GLOW-WORM.

When the daybreak smites the crag,
Fasting, climb its rocky spire;
Wave thy mantle for a flag
Plunge to darkness through the fire.
Zephyr's arms shall then receive thee,
Cradling bear, and lightly leave thee
At the Palace of Desire.

PANTHIA.

We must climb the crag and cast ourselves into the
abyss. Then will Zephyr catch us and carry us
into the palace.

AEON. [*To* PODAGRA.]

Madness!

PODAGRA.

I like not this plunging. Who can tell how good
a catch this Zephyr may prove. Zephyr is like to
be a fumbling ball-player. The creature has col-
lapsed. This deliverance was a great effort of

CUPID AND PSYCHE

divination for him. He is become a worm without a glow. I cannot fear him now. Lo, I will kick the prophet. [GLOW-WORM *moves his feelers.*] Ghost of Patroclus! Move him out, some of you! Control him, my dear Panthia!

PANTHIA.

Sister Meroë, to-morrow we shall see Psyche!

MEROË.

And her husband!

PANTHIA.

To-morrow at dawn you and I will climb the peak and cast ourselves from its pinnacle. Then will Zephyr spread her arms for us and waft us to the Palace of Psyche. [*She holds up the Proclamation.*] "When they are found, let Psyche hold a lamp above her sleeping husband at midnight."

MEROË.

How can we get her to do that?

PANTHIA.

Charm her, child! The great world-powers are now our ministers. Panthia's wings are spread. Fear nothing.

AEON. [*To PODAGRA.*]

This is not a man's work, brother Podagra. After all, this paying of visits is woman's business.

PODAGRA. [*To AEON, nodding.*]

Head pins and curl boxes! Shall we go see the Thracian boxer at the amphitheatre?

AEON. [*To PODAGRA.*]

You speak like an oracle. Wait till they leave——

CUPID AND PSYCHE

PANTHIA. [*Points to GLOW-WORM.*]

Leave him to sleep off his stupor in the cave.

They creep out severally.

ACT II

SCENE III. PSYCHE'S *bedchamber.*

On the left up-stage a four poster classic bed, with hangings. In the front of the stage and a little to the right, a low couch. CUPID and PSYCHE.

PSYCHE.

Must you be gone so soon, sweet butterfly?
You flit with morning ever. Say what hest,
What business drives your wings about the world
In their invisible and whirring flight,
Touching the blossoms, waking spicy spring,
Or peeping in the happy floweret's eyes
To tell them day is nigh? My love, my joy,
Whom the sun snatches—Husband, are you there?
Love-bird, I see thee not. Say you are here;
Or fan me with the down upon your wings
That I may feel their waving.

CUPID.

Lo, my sweet,

I'm at thine elbow.

PSYCHE.

Feathery and smooth.

Must you go floating through the marble clouds
And leave me watching?

CUPID. [*Stringing his bow.*]

Ay, I have business at the Pyramids.

PSYCHE.

To kiss the stony lips of Memnon's statue?

CUPID AND PSYCHE

CUPID.

Worse than the stinging kisses of a bee—
I must set fire in a frozen heart
A league beyond the towers of Babylon.

PSYCHE.

What dreadful trade is this?

CUPID.

Semiramis——

PSYCHE.

With women, sweet? Must I be jealous then?

CUPID.

Yes, if you fear the favorites of heaven,
Leda, Alcmena and Persephone,—
And love-struck women of our golden age;
Medea with the wound that will not heal;
Deserted Dido, Phaedra's poisoned pain;
And singing Sappho on her island cliff.

PSYCHE.

Not thee they love then, my young Emperor!

CUPID.

Tyro, that in a glassy curling wave,
Woo'd of the water god——

PSYCHE.

But not of *thee*——

CUPID.

They know me not. And I nor love nor hate,
But pour my kindling arrows with the sun,
Life-giving round the world. Adieu, sweet saint,
The dusk shall find me on the window-sill
Poised o'er my bride.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

PSYCHE.

Alas, that you must go!

[CUPID *steps upon the low window sill and
exit as if flying.*

He is some feathered minion of the sky,
Yet loves me only. All my heart's in that.
How many women know their husbands less,
And trust them less. The serpent in their lives
Is the unknown. But my bright dragon's eye
Is fixèd like Arcturus at the pole,
And turns on me.

Enter ZEPHYR

ZEPHYR.

O Madam, a great accident has happ'd——

PSYCHE.

O silly Zephyr! Could you know my bliss
You would not prate to me of accidents.
Let rubies crack, and every orient pearl
Roll back to Neptune's caverns, I care not;
My husband loves me: there's the crystal cup
That never shall be broke.

ZEPHYR.

The gods forefend!
And yet I fear some bleak calamity.

PSYCHE.

Speak, foolish girl: there's no calamity
Except where terror makes one. Tell thy tale.

ZEPHYR.

Creeping at dawn, beneath the orange trees
After my lord had sped on Phœbus' wheel,
I saw a shadow as of owls in flight;
And looking upward, lo, the princesses,
Your sisters, Meroë and Panthia,
In gorgeous raiment clad,—like pheasants fall,

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Wheeling and tumbling through the airy light,
As if some great magician on the rock
Had hurled them to their doom.

I could not pause,
Nor reason, but to save their lives
I stretched my arms to catch them.

PSYCHE.

Are they hurt?

ZEPHYR.

Ruffled and panting, but not hurt, they rest
Beneath a blossom-dripping pergola.

PSYCHE.

Let them come here.
Mercy, but this is strange! Some angry fiend
Pursues my sisters.

ZEPHYR.

No, 'tis they that hunt.
Beware, my lady! Panthia is a witch,
And both look black as malice.

Exit ZEPHYR

PSYCHE.

Not against me.
I never wished them ill or gave ill words,
When for my coyness they would threaten me
Because I would not wed. And can they storm,
If I have drifted into happiness
Across a tomb? My joy will bear me up
Against all taunting.

Enter MEROË and PANTHIA

Welcome, my sisters, howsoe'er ye come.
Ye'll give me tidings of my mother dear,
And that old man, that dear and sacred head,
My father. Does his blessing come with you?

MEROË.

Our father is quite well.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

PANTHIA.

And mother, too.

And, Psyche, they have grieved at your neglect.
Why hide you in this palace, why conceal
The station of your lord? A criminal
Who cloaks his evil doings from the day,
And bids his wife eschew her family,
Could not be colder.

MEROË.

Why leave *us* to come

O'er breakneck battlements to this abode
Of gorgeous wonder, here to find at last
A Queen too proud to know us?

PANTHIA.

Could not you

Have sent some message to your aged saint,
Your father?

MEROË.

Could you not have told your name?

[*They are a little insistent and vaguely pressing and threatening. Enter ZEPHYR at the back.*]

PSYCHE.

Alas, my name is Psyche.

MEROË.

Ay, but *his*——

PSYCHE.

Zephyr, bring seats and cushions.

[*PSYCHE helps to do so herself.*]

MEROË. [*Aside to PANTHIA, pointing to table.*]
Rubies of Cathay.

The hangings, needlework! No cradle yet.

PANTHIA. [*To MEROË.*]

I see no husband. [*To PSYCHE.*] May we sit and talk?

CUPID AND PSYCHE

PSYCHE.

Pray,—at your will.

MEROË.

The journey was severe.

PANTHIA.

And you shall tell us of your householdry,
The woman's way. Your husband is from home?

PSYCHE.

Yes, sister.

MEROË.

Is he often so, my dear?

PSYCHE.

Why, yes, I hardly know—I should have asked
For yours. Are Aeon and Podagra well?

PANTHIA. [*To MEROË.*]

The woman's watching us.

[*To ZEPHYR.*]

Zephyr is your name.

Fetch me a cup of water from the spring.

[*ZEPHYR demurs and looks towards*

PSYCHE.

PSYCHE.

A cup of water, Zephyr.

Exit, ZEPHYR

MEROË.

What is your husband's office?

PSYCHE.

I scarce know

That I can tell his office.

MEROË.

What's his name?

PANTHIA.

How old is he?

CUPID AND PSYCHE

MEROË.

How handsome?
Is he gay, or solemn, like yourself?

PANTHIA.

And did he come
With prancing horses to the monument
Or swim like Luna towards Endymion
Down from the sky?

PSYCHE. [*Aside.*]

If I could show my love invisible
I'd not expose him to their vulture eyes.
He is the lord and savior of my soul
That only can be seen with eyes of love.

[*During the following colloquy MEROË and
PANTHIA draw nearer and nearer to
PSYCHE, who is at first surprised, then
affronted, and finally confused and
dazed by the attack.*]

PANTHIA.

Thy husband lives?
Show us his picture.

MEROË.

Let us see his cloak.
Tell us the nearest guess thou hast of him.

PANTHIA.

[*Making passes in the air over PSYCHE.*]
Tell, tell, tell!

PSYCHE. [*As if overcome by the spell.*]

At night my love appears
Like Hermes in the dusk—a Phidian shape,
With the immortal beauty of his mind
Surrounding me.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

PANTHIA. [*To MEROË, almost hissing.*]
In the blind soul of her moth's mind and when
common sense and common eyesight are shut, Psyche
sees!

MEROË. [*To PANTHIA.*]
Now strike!

PANTHIA.
[*Approaching PSYCHE and making passes
with heavy power.*]
When the Tyrian dyes commingle
In the moonlit corridors,
And the stars of midnight tingle
In the Parian marble floors,
And the spirits creep and crouch
Past the bridegroom and his couch;
When the breezes lift his hair
Spicing it with juniper,
And the earthy breath of night,
Cool and bitter, blithe and damp,
Feeds the flicker of a lamp,
Which the little bride doth light,
Holding it above the couch
While the spirits creep and crouch;
Lift it, hold it high above;
Psyche, view thy sleeping love!

MEROË.
You have dazed her.

PANTHIA.
I have stabbed the poison to her entrails. Come!
[*To PSYCHE.*] Sister, we must go now. Bid your
slave lift us to the battlement.

PSYCHE. [*Dazed, smiling.*]
Going so soon? But I must show you the orangery.
You will tell father you saw Psyche. All's well.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

[*Aside.*] I have a pain here that I had when I was three years old, and saw the black creature by the fountain. [*To sisters.*] Forgive me, sisters, if I have slighted you. My head swims a little. But you are welcome.

MEROË.

A natural illness. Sister Panthia, we had best leave now.

Enter ZEPHYR. Exeunt MEROË and PANTHIA.

ZEPHYR.

What have they done to you? Lie down, Madam. The vixens have hurt you. Did they bite you?

PSYCHE. [*Nodding and shuddering.*]

I don't know.

ZEPHYR.

Shall I dash them to atoms?

PSYCHE.

No, no, no. Let them go. Waft them to the crag. Let Apollo judge. Shut the doors and lay me on the bed. Too much light.

[*PSYCHE lies down. Exit ZEPHYR. She enters again, closes doors, draws curtains, making a half-light. ZEPHYR kneels by the bedside.*]

PSYCHE.

Doors are shutting in my brain. I shall sleep soon.—Is my lord come?

ZEPHYR.

Not yet, Madam.

PSYCHE.

Would I might see him. When he comes, wake me. Do not let me sleep—Sleep's evil. Promise

CUPID AND PSYCHE

me, Zephyr, for the blinds are closing. Something comes down.

ZEPHYR.

I promise, my lady.

PSYCHE.

Once at a banquet was a Lydian boy
With curls like hanks of silk.

He called me queen:
He sidled nigh and kissed me. Psyche slapped
him;—
But Lord, I loved him.

[*Sleeps.*

[ZEPHYR rises cautiously, arranges the coverings, sets the room a little to rights, lights a small invisible flame in a household shrine at the back, and sits again to watch. Enter CUPID between the curtains on the window sill.

CUPID.

What, is it so late?

[ZEPHYR holds up her finger.]

Sickness here! Miasma,—odor of nightshade.

[Takes his bow and arrows.

ZEPHYR. [*As before.*]

Her sisters have been here.

CUPID. [*Shrugs.*]

My arrows cannot reach them. [*Lays down bow.*]
What's amiss?

ZEPHYR.

One of them must have bit her. I was gone.
When I came back she fought with drowsiness
Like some sweet angel dragged upon by fiends,
Bidding me wake her when her lord should come;

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Then swooned into a sleep, and now she moans,
Mutters and clutches in a restless dream.

CUPID. [*Approaching the bed.*]
Psyche, my Psyche——

PSYCHE.

Husband, is it thou?
I cannot see thee. O my eyes are blind.

CUPID.
Nay, dost remember? Love's invisible.
Thou must not see me now.

PSYCHE.
Where art thou?

CUPID.
Here, my loved one, by thy side.

PSYCHE.
Would I might see thee.

CUPID.
That would bring the curse,
The blight to part us. Venus wills it so.

PSYCHE.
A tyrant! Art thou sunny or dark-haired,
Like the Egyptian shepherds?

CUPID.
I am young,
All of my beauty lies in loving thee.
Forbear, my Psyche, shall we break the globe
Of our celestial happiness?

PSYCHE.
Ah, sweet,
Thy comfort comes again. But go not hence

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Till sleep shall drowse these phantasies away
And give us back the morn.

CUPID.

I'll sit by thee
As when I waited at the sculptured tomb,
Watching till love should wake.

PSYCHE.

So rest: love's best and sight is error.

CUPID. [*To ZEPHYR.*]

Smite some soft cloud of music from thine harp,
But nothing startling.

[*Music.*

[*PSYCHE sleeps, CUPID watches, nods. Later he rises and goes to the couch, where he lies down. Music changes its character. PSYCHE stirs, rises as if in her sleep, goes to the back, lights a little Greek lamp and moves forward till she holds it above the couch.*

PSYCHE.

A winged boy! O heavens, how beautiful!
'Tis Cupid with his quiver at his back.
A god! A glowing and immortal child
More radiant than Apollo's archery,
With crisped, burnished ringlets on his brow
Smiling in slumber. Yet of manly port
As if Adonis on a hunting-trip
Bore Cupid's dart. O Psyche, drone and slave,
This is thy master! Kneel and kiss his feet,
Then seek thy happy couch to dream again.

[*She makes a misstep and a drop of burning oil is seen to flicker slowly down through the air and seems to light on CUPID. He springs up, seizes his bow.*

CUPID AND PSYCHE

CUPID.

Off, Villains! Murder! Something has burned me.
A scalding drop of oil has hurt my wing!
My girl, how come you here? Why stand you thus,
And hold a dizzy lamp? What eyes thou hast!
A glaring Gorgon sees not more than thou.
Thou dost behold me! Psyche, Psyche mine,
There is no leisure for a long adieu,
For Venus springs her net. My sweet, my soul,
I'll love thee ever!

*[The clank of chains is heard. The lamp
falls and is dashed to pieces. Dark-
ness.]*

Too late! The goddess comes!

*[Prison noises and disordered scuffle, then
silence and complete darkness. The
light glows and shows VENUS VICTRIX.
At her feet lie CUPID and PSYCHE in
chains.]*

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE I. VENUS' *Boudoir*. VENUS at her toilet.
FOTIS is putting on her slippers.

VENUS. [*Aside.*]
I'll conquer yet! The miscreants are gaff'd
But not subdued. [*To FOTIS.*]

Why do you fix your eyes
As if you saw a demon?

FOTIS.

Sorry, Madam.
The wrinkle at your mouth is sharp as tin.

VENUS.
Give me the Rhodian unguent. I must smile
Or Mars will slight me. How's my peppery boy?

FOTIS.
Sleeps, Madam.

VENUS.
Him I can control;
But she is of a deep and crafty wit,
And draws on forces that I cannot bind,
Clutching at fate still. Bring the villains in.

FOTIS.
Madam, I'll need a hand to help me then;
For Master Cupid bites.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

VENUS.

He bites?—The angel!

FOTIS.

Madam, I have a friend, I am engaged.

VENUS.

Fotis engaged! To whom, unfeeling girl?

FOTIS.

There is a groom, one Glow-worm, by your leave
An excellent honest man, and loves me well.

VENUS.

He'll watch thee well by night! But what of him?

FOTIS.

He's in the kitchen, Ma'am: his powerful arms
Would soon control young master.

VENUS.

Bring him in.

*[Enter GLOW-WORM as bridegroom. His
eyes blink at the light.]*

[To FOTIS.]

Why does he wear that bunch of celery?

FOTIS.

It is his fancy, Ma'am, a badge of 's office.

Oh, he is very proud and sensitive.

[To GLOW-WORM.]

Glow-worm, our mistress greets thee.

GLOW-WORM.

My duty to you, Ma'am.

[Bows to the wrong place.]

FOTIS.

Here, sweet, here,

Her Majesty is here.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

VENUS. [*To GLOW-WORM.*]

Canst thou attach thee to a flighty knave
And hold him while he takes his punishment?

GLOW-WORM.

Ay, if I lay my feelers on him he'll not squirm.
[He agitates his feelers.]

FOTIS.

I warrant him, my lady.

VENUS.

Fetch them in.

Exeunt FOTIS and GLOW-WORM

The boy shall be imprisoned in a cage
Like a clipped blackbird; and the haughty wench
Shall fag about the confines of the world
Harried by Venus' bloodhounds.

*[Enter from opposite sides GLOW-WORM,
holding CUPID and FOTIS leading
PSYCHE. The culprits are still in
chains.]*

VENUS. [*To CUPID.*]

Ah, ruffian!

[To GLOW-WORM.]

Give me the bow and arrows.

CUPID.

Mamma, your hair's undone.

*[As he does this, he darts a hand at her and
snatches a curl.]*

Too blond! I knew the girl in Attica
Who owned that curl.

VENUS.

Wretch! Monster!

Hold him, Glow-worm. Fotis, I bleed.

[CUPID is over-mastered.]

CUPID AND PSYCHE

CUPID.

She bleeds in hairpins.

[*Struggles and tries to bite.*]

VENUS. [*To FOTIS.*]

Quick, girl, the shears! [FOTIS *procures a large pair of shears, and VENUS cuts off CUPID'S wings, which she throws on the floor.*] Now [*panting*] the cage! [FOTIS *fetches a wicker cage and CUPID is thrust into it.*] Thou wingless worm!

CUPID.

Come nearer, Mother, I will whisper you a song in your ear.

FOTIS.

Do not go near him, Madam.

VENUS. [*Looking at him doatingly.*]

Say it, darling.

CUPID.

Love within a cage
Takes the tyrant's rage.

(Sing small.)

Cupid sits and sings

While he grows new wings——

[*Makes a sudden grab through the bars of cage, but fails to reach her.*]

That's all!

VENUS.

You naughty insect!

[*To PSYCHE.*]

But thou, siren soul,
Defiant woman! Forth against the world!
Clamber across the rocks of Caucasus
And bid Prometheus teach thee. Fetch a jug
Of Lethe's water for my toilet case;
The wool-tips of the guarded golden fleece

CUPID AND PSYCHE

Shalt thou collect, and pull the gossamer
From the Chimera's eyebrows for my muff;
And thy despair shall feed my luxury.
Thy spirit shall be quelled through Venus' power.
Thou art the slave of Venus from this hour.

[PSYCHE *is driven forth.*

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE II. *Evening landscape. The god Pan plays his pipes.*

PAN.

My sleepy goats went huddling to their cote
As if they trusted not the power of Pan
Beyond its palings. Nibbling field-mice cheep
But shun the moon. And with a shattered hull
Across the circling oaktops, Cynthia
Floats on the twilight. Hark! the marshy sounds,
That should be jocund, wail like Acheron,
And night's uneasy.

[PSYCHE is discovered crouching in the twilight.]

Lo, some wayfarer

Storm-struck and tottering, a woman too,
Whose locks the briers of grief have rudely combed,
Moans on the bank.

PSYCHE.

O Pan, O universal house of life,
Pan, Pan!

PAN.

Her fluttering pulses tap the drum of death:
It is my summons. Woman, who art thou
That clutchest in the broken strings of thought
To find the music?

PSYCHE.

Pan, O deathless Pan,
Fling thy kind mantle over Psyche's grave

CUPID AND PSYCHE

And turn my mould to love. I gave him all,
Worked as a bond-slave in the tyrant's mill,
Crippled my heart with labors, ran the road
And toiled the mountain, digged old treasures up
And drugged the greedy maws of Cerberus
To feed the spite of Venus. Still she smiled
And, as I sickened, moved her tricky goal.
See her last errand! In this onyx jar
The earrings of the lost Proserpina,
Which savage Venus covets, are inurned.
But never shall they hang by Venus' cheek.
Hope is no more. Life's cistern is run out,
And love is burned to ashes: let me die.
My husband she hath held in servitude,
While me she ran to death about the world.

PAN.

It was towards me that thou wast journeying.

PSYCHE.

How? Has some woman felt a fate like mine,
That thou dost know me?

PAN.

Thou art like the rest,
Thy feet have paced the high-road.

PSYCHE.

And my lord?

PAN.

Thy tasks have freed him.

PSYCHE.

How?—my pain, his cure?

PAN.

The drudgery which thou hast blindly wrought
Has caused his wings to grow. He is a god
And will reclaim thee from all-judging Zeus.
Yea, towards Olympus doth thy lover soar,

CUPID AND PSYCHE

To meet his bride in Immortality.
Thy labors raised him. Lo, what darkness here,
And yet what life. Thus thrives invisible
The world behind the world that rules the world,
And brings the just to heaven.

PSYCHE.

O Pan, great Pan!
Wizard and true physician of the soul,
Give me one drop of some deep medicine
To make me sleep.

PAN. [*Takes the earrings from the urn.*]

Toil-won trophies of the tomb,
Starry children of the mine,
From the depths of hell ye come
In the depths of heaven to shine.

[*Places them in PSYCHE'S ears.*]

Psyche, close thy steadfast eyes;
Sleep, and wake in Paradise.

CURTAIN

ACT III *

SCENE III. *The Banquet of the Gods*
Enter CUPID—approaches ZEUS

CUPID.

Father of gods and men, thy child am I.
My bride was by my mother sacrificed
And held in durance. Psyche is her name.
Now by the might of thine ambrosial head,
And by the awful lightnings from thy throne
I claim her in Olympus. She hath saved
The God of Love. And thou, cloud-throned Zeus,
Shalt save Love's savior. At our gate one stays,
Borne in her sleep by flying messengers.

[ZEUS *kisses* CUPID.]

HERMES.

Eternal Sire, the lad is eloquent,
Young faces in Olympus are too scarce,
And these are heavenly.

APOLLO.

It is a maid
That from her youth hath been my votaress.

JUNO.

I see the eye of Zeus, and I consent.

VENUS.

And I lack will
To match my might against the thunderer.

* This last scene is to be treated as a pageant. Consult Raphael's picture, etc. Suppress the text, if desired.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

ZEUS.

Admit the nymph!

[*Chorus during which PSYCHE enters and is met by CUPID and received by the gods.*]

Psyche comes, throw wide the portals

Set the lovers side by side:

In the throng of the Immortals

Wingèd Cupid takes his bride.

She hath trod the Stygian meadows,

She hath known the dragon's eye:

She hath passed beyond the shadows;

Psyche ever sought the sky.

Let the waves of the Ægean

Waft the story far and wide:

While Olympus lifts a pæan

To the bridegroom and the bride.

LAFAYETTE

A DIVERTISSEMENT OF THREE SCENES

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

WASHINGTON.

COLONEL HAMILTON.

LAFAYETTE.

A CAPTAIN.

THE MUSE OF HISTORY.

Lafayette was written for the Lafayette Fund Committee, and acted at the Century Theatre in January, 1915.

LAFAYETTE

SCENE I. *Washington's Camp at Valley Forge.*
A winter sunset. The camp lies along a steep ridge, on the edge of the Schuylkill River, which meanders into the distance. The huts are seen among pine trees on whose branches lies the snow. On one side, the log cabin of WASHINGTON.

The misery and destitution of the troops is made apparent by their ragged uniforms and emaciation, by their bare feet, by the primitive nature of their huts, their cooking arrangements and the utensils which lie about.

WASHINGTON *stands before his log cabin.*
Enter an orderly

WASHINGTON.

Send Colonel Hamilton to me.

Exit orderly

It seems the British Army is well pleased
To burn their Christmas candles for a month,
Making such holiday in Philadelphia
That we, whose Christmas trees stand in the soil,
May thank all-overarching Providence
For their rejoicings. Should Sir William guess
What famine and what skeletons are here
He'd make a dash at us between the toasts,—
Spoiling his feast with war.

Enter HAMILTON

LAFAYETTE

HAMILTON.
Your Excellency——

WASHINGTON.
Good evening, Colonel Hamilton.
What say our scouts?

HAMILTON.
All's quiet. War's asleep.
The danger lurks behind.

WASHINGTON.
Speak plainly, Sir.
This is no time to hint conspiracies.
Whom do you mean, Sir?

HAMILTON.
I mean Congress, Sir—
The danger comes from Congress.
[*Showing paper.*]
A remonstrance
Against our going into winter quarters.

WASHINGTON.
What? You say—they'd keep us in the field?

HAMILTON.
They wish a hot campaign; fearing, no doubt,
The too luxurious living of our camp.
Civilian intrigue chokes us. We have fought
While these same wolfish members prowled about,
Barked at our heels, upset our best commands;
Who now—God save my soul—begrudge us beds.
These lawyers think that soldiers feel no frost,
Sleep on the sod by nature, drink the dew,

LAFAYETTE

And fill their bellies with a cannonade.
Have I your leave to write and tell them so?

WASHINGTON.

Certainly not, Sir. Let me see the paper.

[HAMILTON *hands a paper.*]

They counsel us to drive the British out,
Storm Philadelphia, and protect the hearths
Of peaceful Pennsylvania. By my soul!
These gentlemen have written by a hearth
In some well-lardered, comfortable inn.
Tell them we will receive them in a camp
Where men unblanketed sit up all night
Before the sentinel fire,—where tracks of blood
Follow a naked footing at reviews;
Where uniforms mean rags, and rations—famine;
And soldiers who are beggars, save in courage,
Carry a nation's fortunes in their hearts.
Unfed, unclad, uncomforted, they live
As if an inward supernatural fire
Supplied their life. O might some spark of it
Leap out from our poor, starving yeomanry
To plant in these protesting gentlemen
A kindred flame of honor! Show the camp!
To-morrow let them see it.

HAMILTON.

General,

If I do that, some rumor will break loose
Of our three thousand sick: one man in four
Is on the sick-list.

WASHINGTON.

Lead them through the camp
And let its spectres speak. What have you there?

LAFAYETTE

HAMILTON.

Here are the day's desertions—twenty-seven;
And here a list,—eleven officers
Whose terms expire. And here the last memorial
To Congress from substantial citizens
Who hate the prolongation of the war.

WASHINGTON.

Are they not "Friends,"—or peace-men?

HAMILTON.

Quakers, Sir,
Who quake at all things. First they quake with
fear—

And then,—for *fear* they have not *quaked* enough.
They tremble at the British, till we come;
Then tremble lest we forage on their farms;
And being saved by us, tremble the more
For that war-spirit and that army-caste
So foreign to their hearts, so dangerous
To true religion and that deeper duty,—
America's true mission to mankind.
Never, they say, can gunpowder assist
The purposes of God; and if we fight
We but destroy our future usefulness,
Offend all foreign nations and become
No better than the warring Kings abroad.
If this memorial were mere literature,
It were a pretty piece to make one laugh.
But, General, the sad desertions here

[*Showing paper.*]

And those whose terms of valor have expired
Are children of these quaking brethren:
Their blood is cooled by that memorial ink
Which here is spilled so freely—
Have I your leave to write and tell them so?

LAFAYETTE

WASHINGTON.

Not so: we stand in need of their good will
And they are kindly people. Yet I trow
There needs a government of common sense
That shall protect such kindness with the sword.
God grant our country lack not souls like these;—
Nor men to save them. Hamilton, our fate
Sways in an unseen balance.

[*Pointing to the camp.*]

Behold a nation's life,
That in those twinkling camp-fires seems to merge
In the still sunset! And behind them both,—
The Power that rules our lives. Leave me, my
friend.

Exit HAMILTON

WASHINGTON.

Methought I heard a trumpet in the sky—
But voices, surely—

Enter an ORDERLY

ORDERLY.

Major General, the Marquis Lafayette.

Exit ORDERLY—*Enter* LAFAYETTE

WASHINGTON.

I knew it was an angel.

LAFAYETTE.

Your Excellence will pardon the late hour,
And sudden interruption—

[WASHINGTON and LAFAYETTE shake hands
affectionately. They almost embrace.]

WASHINGTON.

My dear Marquis,
Almost my son—the pleasure that you bring
Makes every hour its own. Come when you like.
If war can bring such union as we know

LAFAYETTE

Between a rough old soldier, like myself,
And the white flower of ancient chivalry
In Lafayette,—what charm can peace propose?
But you have news——

LAFAYETTE.

Grave news! Great news!—
Prepare,—for to receive it
Will task your powers of self-control, my General.

WASHINGTON.

Come, I am tough: I see that it is good.

LAFAYETTE.

Know, my Commander, that his Majesty
The King of France and the Commissioners
Of your United States have signed a treaty,
Agreeing to effectually maintain
The Independence, sovereignty and freedom
Of these United States, in government
And in commercial dealings—absolute
As any sovereign people on the earth.
To this the honor of an ancient race
The King doth pledge, and every honest guess
Shows that a fleet and army follow it.

WASHINGTON.

Let us give thanks to God. The dawn was long;
Now Independence, bursting like a sun,
Shines out of France. The mighty shield of France
Is held above our feeble infancy;
And a new nation, cradled in her arms,
Smiles on the world.

LAFAYETTE.

O Liberty, the heart of Washington
Hath been thy camp!

LAFAYETTE

WASHINGTON.

Marquis, give thanks to God—And thee, my friend,
The nearest piece of France that I can reach

I'll lovingly embrace.—

I must announce these blessings to the men

Whose lives have wrought them.

Summon the army!

Bring me pen and ink——

[To ORDERLY.

I'll draw a proclamation.

[ORDERLY *brings table, inkstand, quill pens, etc.* WASHINGTON *writes the proclamation.* *Soft music.*]

The Men Assemble

WASHINGTON. [Hands paper to CAPTAIN.]

Read the proclamation, Sir——

CAPTAIN. [*Reads.*]

*It having pleased the Almighty Ruler of the Universe to defend the cause of the United American States and finally to raise up a powerful friend among the princes of the earth, to establish our liberty and independence upon a lasting foundation; it becomes us to set apart a day for gratefully acknowledging the Divine goodness, and celebrating the important event which we owe to his divine interposition. To-morrow the Army shall be assembled in brigades, and by solemn exercises and the firing of cannon shall celebrate the blessed alliance between the arms of France and the United States.

Long live the King of France!

Long live the friendly European Powers!

* These phrases are taken from the original proclamation.

LAFAYETTE

ALL.

Long live the King of France!

Long live the friendly European Powers!

CURTAIN

SCENE II. *Review of Troops of the Allies after the Fall of Yorktown.*

Enter before the curtain the Muse of History, bearing a tall torch.

THE MUSE.

I am the Muse of History whose torch

Illumes the tragic caverns of the Past

With deathless radiance,—quiet as the stars.

Darkling was our stage,

Now moves a gayer pageant on your view

And war's slow watch-fires thrill to scenes of joy.

Two years have passed:—the French have sent a
fleet,

Manned and munitioned by the Royal Will,

Commanded by old gallant Rochambeau,

Heavy with gold to feed Americans,

And bristling with the seasoned troops of France.

This horde hath wrought our great deliverance;

Yorktown has fallen,—where more Frenchmen
fought

Than Yankees in the Continental ranks,—

Yorktown, where Rochambeau and Lafayette,

De Grasse, Saint Simon, and that kingly soul,

Cornwallis, shed a lustre of romance

Forever from the old world on the new;

Yea, like the Paladins of Charlemagne,

Or old crusaders round some mythic King,

LAFAYETTE

They flank the giant frame of Washington.
They are our own: we claim them: they belong
To the heroic legend of our youth
Which cannot die while manhood lives in us.
Therefore hath Fancy pictured a review,—
The Troops that fought at Yorktown,—but be sure
The siege is over, and our tiny men,
Most like the soldiery of fairy-land,
Speak to the spirit.

[Here follows the Review, with just enough speaking by the Muse to explain the manœuvres. At the close of the Review, Washington and Lafayette are found at the front of the stage.]

LAFAYETTE.

Your Excellence, the pilot summons me;
And winds that will not wait blow me toward
France.

O may I find in what awaits me there
Such innocence, such courage, so much hope
As we have known—

WASHINGTON.

Adieu, dear friend. My thoughts shall fly behind
Where youth and glory lead you. May our names
Like towers on some sacred city's wall
Bind our two nations in a lasting league
To save the world. For, Sir, the time shall come
When France, with all the treasures of her mind,
The precious freight of all her centuries,—
Her art, her grace, her freedom and her love,—
Shall stand in peril. May my countrymen
Thinking on thee and me,—run to her aid—
With hearts as generous and hands as full
As Frenchmen showed toward us.

CURTAIN

LAFAYETTE

Before the curtain enter the Muse of History.

MUSE.

My torch burns low, the suffocated world
—Dark as in earthquake—shudders into cracks
That flash and tremble. Light and thought are
dead.

But hark! Hell's wheels are grinding underneath
With muffled and accelerating power
To wreck the world.

A crash,—a flame,—a groan!
Some great cathedral falls. Rheims is no more!
Ah, thou proud beauty of my centuries,
Thou climbing shrine of intellectual fire,
Thou sendest thy last beacon to mankind.
My torch hath caught thy flame,—to treasure it
Till the last judgment!

But, what form is this
Of blackened misery?

*[A small child in rags, through which its
naked limbs are seen, limps forward
slowly and with difficulty.]*

Child, I know thee not,—
Yet surely of my children thou art one.
Starvation in thine eye—I'll give thee food,
Whoe'er thou art. Speak, young one; tell thy
name.

CHILD.

I,—I am Belgium.

MUSE. *[Embraces the child.]*

O thou starving chick,
Art thou the little Belgium that I nursed,—
Belgium, the saddest child of History,—
How have they used thee!

But thou shalt not die.
Be sure of this, my child, thou shalt not die.

LAFAYETTE

Thee have the heavenly angels singled out
To be a victim, yea, the sacrifice,
The symbol and eternal covenant
Of a New Age. The Kingdom shall be stayed
On every noblest passion of the race;
And "Belgium" shall be written on the Bond
That holds mankind at one. I feed thee now,
For now I can no more. But, blessed babe,
I'll save thee too!

Behold, a sunset gleam
O'er the black billows! War has rolled away,
As when a summer's day is laid to sleep,
And one bright planet glimmers in the sky
To guide my glowing footsteps toward the stars.

CURTAIN



ROMULUS AND REMUS

A CHILD'S PLAY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FAUSTULUS
and
ACCA LAURENTIA } Old peasants living by the
Tiber.

ROMULUS } Grandsons of the banished King
and } Numitor.
REMUS }

RHEA SYLVIA, a Vestal Virgin, daughter of Numitor, and mother of the twins.

NUMITOR, the banished King.

AMULIUS, the usurping King.

THE TUSCAN AMBASSADOR.

AUFIDIUS }
and } Two of King Gor's retainers.
FLACCUS }

Captains, Propraetor, soldiers and servants.

SCENES: By the Tiber and the King's Palace at
Alba.

NOTE

The fable is from *Viri Romae* as quoted in Beeson and Miller's Second Latin Book:

Proca, rex Albanorum, Numitorem et Amulium filios habuit. Numitori, qui natu major erat, regnum reliquit; sed Amulius, pulso fratre, regnavit et, ut eum subole privaret, Rheam Silviam, eius filiam, Vestae sacerdotem fecit, quae tamen Romulum et Remum geminos edidit. Ea re cognita Amulius ipsam in vincula coniecit, parvulos alveo impositos abiecit in Tiberim, qui tunc forte super ripas erat affusus; sed relabente flumine eos aqua in sicco reliquit. Vastae tum in iis locis solitudines erant. Lupa, ut fama traditum est, ad vagitum accurrit, infantes lingua lambit, matremque se gessit.

Cum lupa saepius ad parvulos veluti ad catulos reverteretur, Faustulus, pastor regius, re animadversa eos tulit in casam et Accae Laurentiae coniugi dedit educandos. Adulti deinde hi inter pastores primo ludicris certaminibus vires auxere, deinde venando saltus peragrare et latrones a rapina pecorum arcere coeperunt. Quare cum iis insidiati essent latrones, Remus captus est, Romulus vi se defendit. Tum Faustulus necessitate compulsus indicavit Romulo, quis esset eorum avus, quae mater. Romulus statim armatis pastoribus Albam properavit. Interea Remum latrones ad Amulium regem perduxerunt, eum accusantes, quasi Numitoris agros infestare solitus esset; itaque Remus a rege Numitori ad supplicium traditus est; at cum Numitor

ROMULUS AND REMUS

adulescentis vultum considerans aetatem minimeque servilem indolem compararet, haud procul erat, quin nepotem agnosceret. Nam Remus oris lineamentis erat matri simillimus aetasque expositionis temporibus congruebat. Ea res dum Numitoris animum anxium tenet, repente Romulus supervenit, fratrem liberat, interempto Amulio avum Numitorem in regnum restituit.

ROMULUS AND REMUS

ACT I

SCENE. *The cabin of FAUSTULUS.* FAUSTULUS
and ACCA.

ACCA.

The boys are late again: I cannot think
What keeps them. Romulus is lean
With hunting, and his eyeballs gleam
Like a wild boar's; while Remus kills himself
To keep the pace: his chest was never good.
Dost thou remember, husband, how he lay,
Poor rat, amid the muddy osier twigs—
Dost thou remember Remus, how he looked,
Yellow as cheese? The Tiber killed his heart,
But Romulus, with wolf's milk on his lip
Doubled a fist no bigger than a nut
And swelled his neck like Mars.

FAUSTULUS.

Ay, and the distance thundered. The she-wolf
That left her cubs to feed them, seeing me,
Circled the forest edge, then near'd again,
Crowding and fawning past my pruning-hook,
Until she stood above the kingly twins
Panting with pleasure; while they drained her dugs
Like Bacchus with his goatskin. They are sprung
Of some antique and royal lineage.
For never striplings wore so high a mien;

ROMULUS AND REMUS

They walk like statues, and their chiseled brows
Seem to be ringed with gold.

ACCA.

Would they were come!
At dawn a leaden fear knocked at my heart.
I rose and trembling sought them. They were
gone!

No neighbor saw the boys, save Regulus,
Who met them on the road to Tusculum
An hour before the stars of midnight set.
Husband, what think you?

FAUSTULUS.

Why, that they are gone
To scale the rocky slopes of Algidus
For mountain deer, or in the Alban Lake
Sink their dank nets. Our hunters will return
Laden with spoil.

ACCA.

O Faustus, see there!
The nets and hunting-spears are in the stand.

FAUSTULUS.

What? Look again: it is impossible.

ACCA.

And see, above the fire, the arms are gone!
The swords and shields are gone. What can it
mean?

FAUSTULUS.

It means—Now, by my father's ghost I swear,
It means they're gone to fight the robber bands!
Give me my targe and hanger; get my belt;
I'm off to aid them.

ACCA.

You? Too old, too old!

ROMULUS AND REMUS

FAUSTULUS.

Too old! I am not old. My teeth can bite,
My hands can strike, my nails can dig their eyes.
These borderers are vermin. In my youth
I've beaten such with flails.

[*Coughs.*]

The cattle thieves
Shall find old Faustulus above the sod,
And able for a thrust at some of them.
Give me my three-pronged fork!

ACCA.

The man is mad!
Your cough is on you, since you kneeled too long
In the onion patch. [*Prays.*] O Faunus, Faunus,
Thee have I slighted, God of garden-work!
Punish him not. Three handfuls of white meal
I'll lay with salt at sunrise on thy shrine.
Pity old Faustulus, nor make him mad
Through age and weakness.

FAUSTULUS.

Woman, stand aside!
[*He approaches the door, throws it open and
a light streams in.*]

Fall on your knees, Laurentia,—a vestal virgin!
[*Both peasants fall on their knees.*
Enter RHEA SYLVIA]

RHEA SYLVIA.

Guardian of the Sacred Flame,
Rhea Sylvia is my name;
Daughter of an Alban King
From whom the Roman state shall spring.

I, a vestal virgin, tending
That small flame of fire ascending,
Birthless, ageless, and unending,—
Shade with holy hands the glow,

ROMULUS AND REMUS

Kindled centuries ago,
Which Rome unto the world shall show.

Faustulus, lift your eyes to Jupiter,
And thou too, Acca. [*They rise.*]

Clods of hallowed clay
And foster-parents to anointed flesh,
The boys ye nurse are grandsons to a King,
And I their mother. For King Numitor
Was by a wicked brother cast away
And did become a wandering mendicant.
But me, his daughter, Rhea Sylvia,
The goddess Vesta saved. The boys are mine.
Mars is their father.

[*Here a slight clanking of arms is heard.*]

And their destiny
To found a martial state. Their swaddling clothes
Were dipped in purple ere the babes were set,
Through Fate's contriving, on the yellow flood
Of angry Tiber. Take the token'd rags once more
Which peasant piety has wisely hid,
And when my sons shall speed them toward the
King,—

The false and wicked King Amulius,—
Follow them with the treasures in your hands;
But secretly and quickly. For the rest—
Send prayers to Jove, and set a salted cake
Nightly on Vesta's cupboard, by the hearth.

[*They fall on their knees.*]

Exit RHEA SYLVIA

ACCA.

Is it a goddess?

FAUSTULUS.

Nay, wife, the legend comes to me once more.
This is the daughter of King Numitor
Whose wicked brother drove him from the throne,
Casting this lady, Alba's rightful heir,

ROMULUS AND REMUS

Into a dungeon. There those babes were born
Who through the will of Heav'n were cast adrift
To ride the toppling waves in yon frail dish
Till the relenting river pitied them
And dried them on his lap.
But now a god hath broke the seals of time
To show the treasure: Mars doth claim his own;
And our two boys are Alba's rightful Kings.
Give me the trinkets.

ACCA.

[*Goes to the cradle and takes out some tatters and ornaments; they include the smallest size of baby-garments, purple, and very rich in material.*]

These are the treason in my happiness.
Our life began the day you found the boys,
And that March morning when you brought them
in
Flooded our home with joy. Now comes an ebb—
And these rich Kings will steal their children back
And leave us empty.

FAUSTULUS. [*Holds up his hands.*]

Enough, I hear them coming.

[*The peasants put back the rags in the ark. Enter ROMULUS and REMUS with swords and clatter. REMUS is wounded.*]

ROMULUS.

Hold to my neck, brother; hold tightly. Don't let go your grasp. It's only a scratch, man, a mere slice: my shield caught the blow. Here, some-

ROMULUS AND REMUS

body——! He's fainted, Mother. He's safe enough—Get some hemp and acanthus leaves. The villain Ausonius has it,—from me. Mars! I killed four of the foxes, hounds, jackals!—Get water!

FAUSTULUS.

What was it, Romulus? Where have ye been?

ROMULUS.

An ambush, Father. Ausonius' cattle thieves. At midnight I heard them in the paddock. We crept out, sighted them, tracked them, followed them to the Volscian Bridge; and then—and then—Devils! An ambush! Twenty men spring out on us. But their arms are nothing—tin skewers. [*Showing his shield.*] Not a dint,—bronze! If you had been there with your hayfork, father, we should have routed them. The cowards!

FAUSTULUS.

There, Mother. I told you so! My fork would have saved them.

ACCA. [*Who is tending the unconscious REMUS.*]
Your fork would have cost the lives of all of you.

FAUSTULUS.

But were not these men Tuscans?

ROMULUS.

Yes, subjects of King Gor of Tusculum
Whom if I live I mean to discipline
Till Romulus has banished robbery.
Yea, till his name's a rocky citadel
That spreads protection o'er the Latian plain
And caps a Burgh of Law.

ROMULUS AND REMUS

ACCA.

He's in his dreams.

Open your eyes, my Remus. Remus, dear.

ROMULUS.

The lad is safe,—A flesh wound. See, the blood
Drips and there is no clotting. Wash the wound
And get a cup of goat's milk, Mother dear—
Both of us need it.

FAUSTULUS.

King Gor of Tusculum's a mighty name,—
And bound in Brotherhood to Amulius,
Our Alban King.

ROMULUS.

Our Alban King's a thief!

ACCA.

Hush! In the name of safety——

ROMULUS.

I have heard——

Know we not, all of us, he is a thief?

A tyrant, a usurping murderer?

His banished brother is our lawful King.

ACCA.

Vesta, protect us! Father, he is waking.

[*To ROMULUS.*]

For Jove's own sake, forbear!

O Remus, it is Acca. This is home,

And there are Faustulus and Romulus.

Stand ye about the hearth and say the prayer

We murmured as the earliest sunset died

That gave us children.

ROMULUS AND REMUS

REMUS.

Mother,—and home——

ALL.

Vesta, guardian of the home,
To thy mysteries we come:
On thine altar, bowing low,
Barley cakes and salt we throw.
May thy still and holy light
Be our watch-fire through the night.
[*A tramp of armed men is heard: a loud
knocking at the door.*]

CAPTAIN. [*Without.*]

Open in the name of King Amulius!

FAUSTULUS. [*Opens door.*]

What would ye here?

Enter CAPTAIN and soldiers

CAPTAIN. [*Aside.*]

Faustulus,—peasant-farmer,—on the dyke,—

Acca, his wife,—A cabin hung with nets.

Two ragged lads that look like highwaymen.

[*Aloud.*]

Romulus and Remus, I arrest ye

Upon the charge of murder and sedition.

[*Showing a dagger.*]

The blade and hilt of King Amulius.

[*ROMULUS raises his hand and is immediately
disarmed and overmastered.*]

FAUSTULUS.

Submit, submit, my son.

[*REMUS is raised up.*]

CAPTAIN.

Attention. March!

[*Exeunt all but FAUSTULUS and ACCA.
They stand dazed. They sit down be-
fore the fire. ACCA rises—goes to the*

ROMULUS AND REMUS

wicker ark—takes out the trinkets and baby clothes and puts them in FAUSTULUS' hands. He looks at her, still dazed, as he receives them. They sit in silence.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE: *The throne-room at Alba Longa.*

On one side a hearth with fire. Before it sits NUMITOR, disguised as a wayfarer. The old man's head is covered with a coarse mantle. He is in the attitude of a suppliant, and sits in motionless, dreary, stony silence. Enter KING AMULIUS and the TUSCAN AMBASSADOR. The AMBASSADOR is sumptuously dressed.

AMULIUS.

Ah, Prince, you're stirring early. My good friend King Gor, your royal master, is well served.

If all Ambassadors were as diligent
Kingdoms would turn to Empires.

AMBASSADOR.

God forbid!

We've toil enough to guard our heritage
In Tusculum.

AMULIUS.

A jewel rich and old
Borne on the bosom of a jocund hill.

AMBASSADOR.

We've nothing like your sea of purple wine,
Yon agate cup of blood, the Alban Lake.
The crater looks as black as precious bronze
With Alba Longa whitening on the brim
Like coral reefs in cloudland.

ROMULUS AND REMUS

KING AMULIUS.

Prince, well said!
However merited. Pardon, sir, this day
By the Alban calendar I sit as Judge,
And many duties hold me in their clutch——

AMBASSADOR.

Of course. Yet stay,—the calendar,—one word,—
[*Pulls from his belt a tiny ivory tablet which
is attached to a gold chain about his
neck.*]

—You see I've method

[*Showing calendar.*]

Oh, Ah! Those two young savages
That killed our men. His Majesty was urgent.

KING AMULIUS.

So am I.

He shall not find us slack.

The air upon the terrace tastes of dawn:

Enjoy it while I see my officers.

Believe me, sir, your business burns my list.

[*They bow; exit AMBASSADOR. KING rings
bell. Enter PROPRAETOR. KING mo-
tions with his head towards NUMITOR,
but without turning round.*]

Who is this man?

PROPRAETOR.

It seems some suppliant.

KING.

How came he in?

PROPRAETOR.

I know not. On this day
The suitors, clients, culprits and their friends——

ROMULUS AND REMUS

KING.

Bid him begone.

PROPRÆTOR.

The law prohibits us.

He sits within the sanctuaried orb
Of Vesta's warmth, and has observed its rite.

KING.

I'll question him myself.

[*After a pause, to* PROPRAETOR.]
What prisoners?

PROPRÆTOR.

Aulus, the murderer; old Pertinax
That railed upon the priest; one hunchback thief;
And two young demons from the Tiber's bed,
With reedy hair, brown necks and bloodshot eyes
That terrify the guards. The prison quaked
And bolts were shaken from the Etruscan cave
As they were thrust within.

KING.

You were up all night.

A cup of wine will cure these earthquakes, Sir.
The lads are marked marauders, and have slain
King Gor's retainers. Be accountable
That no phantasmas or religious dreams
Appear which let them loose.

[*Gesture as of turning a key.*]

PROPRÆTOR.

I shall, your Majesty.

Exit PROPRAETOR

KING.

And yet it's strange. I heard a rattling too,
Waked in the night, saw lightnings in the air.

[*Observes* NUMITOR.]

This stranger urks me. I will study him.

ROMULUS AND REMUS

Why should I dread to question this recluse
Who sits like ashes by our homely blaze?

Enter QUEEN

[*Aside.*]

Terror in her face too. My loving Queen—
You've seen a ghost? 'Tis early morning now;
Let us be calm, let us be sensible;
Say what we say without the qualms of night.
Daylight is daylight. Come, my love, be calm.

QUEEN.

The sacred serpent doth refuse her food;
But raising her green head to hiss at me
Coils in a stupor. Next, our haruspex
Was probing in the entrails of his fowls,
When three strong eagles steering from the north
Rose over rapid Tiber like a cloud,—
Winging their way like Gorgons—swooped on him,
And ate the birds of omen.

KING.

Is this all?

QUEEN.

Alba is doomed!

KING.

Hush, the Ambassador
Is on the terrace!

QUEEN.

[*Pointing to* NUMITOR.]

What odd ghost is this
Who sits like Charon on the dismal shore?

KING.

Some miscreant outlaw, a hearth suppliant.
He waits my leisure. Peace, I'll speak to him.

ROMULUS AND REMUS

QUEEN.

Husband, it is a spectre! Never let him
Turn his dead eyes on thee!

KING.

My gentle wife,
He is a harmless beggar. [*Aside.*] Yet I tremble—
So quick to catch is fear.

[*The QUEEN clings to AMULIUS.*]
Stranger, who art thou?

[*NUMITOR turns stiffly, remaining at the
hearth, falls on his knees, holding his
face downwards and raises his hands.
QUEEN screams and falls unconscious.
Enter hurriedly the AMBASSADOR, CAP-
TAIN, PROPRAETOR and servants.*]

AMBASSADOR.

What is the matter, Sirs?

KING.

Nothing, dear friend,
The Queen is out of sorts: some auguries:
A flight of birds, and our great serpent's illness.
The trifles of a day. I have your men
And in the scales of Zeus shall weigh their crimes
While Alba stands. [*To servants.*] Attend her
Majesty,

And bring me word anon. Men, to your posts!

[*The KING assumes his mace as Justicer.
servant hands mace.*]

AMBASSADOR.

One million pardons! I must have your ear.

KING.

What, now?

ROMULUS AND REMUS

AMBASSADOR.

One moment, Sire.

A letter from my King, seven times delayed
And marked: "The haste that kills,"
Was given me on the terrace. Here it is.

KING.

For me? What Kings have written Kings must read.

[*Takes the paper and reads:*]

Brother in Bond-of-Love, Amulius:

Read this alone.—I have certain knowledge that
your brother, Numitor, lives, and likely understand-
ing that he seeks to regain his throne. My news,
which comes from the south, is that he marches with
Samnite cohorts against your citadel.

Protect thyself.

GOR OF TUSCULUM.

[*To an officer.*]

Captain, send every soldier to his post.

[*To PROPRAETOR.*]

Shut be our gates, while on the battlements
The trumpets sound a siege. The water gates
Be duly guarded. Man the arbalests:
Pluck out the crouching augurs from their cells;
The riddle's solved. Now let religion shake
Old women into tremors; we are men.

[*To the AMBASSADOR.*]

Your King has saved us. I will judge these men
In courtesy towards his most kingly zeal.

Then to the war! Bring forth the prisoners.

The King ascends his throne!

[*KING takes his place on the throne. The
CAPTAIN brings in ROMULUS and
REMUS. Enter also two peasants from
Tusculum, namely, AUFIDIUS and
FLACCUS, two rough-looking high-
waymen.*]

ROMULUS AND REMUS

Captain, prefer your charge.

CAPTAIN.

These men are apprehended at the suit of the King of Tusculum on the charge of crossing his borders and of killing his peaceful subjects.

KING.

Where are the witnesses?

[CAPTAIN *pushes forward* AUFIDIUS and
FLACCUS.]

[*Aside to* AMBASSADOR.]

My villains outrank yours in sheer good looks.

[*To* ROMULUS.]

What are your names? Whence come ye?

ROMULUS.

We are named

I Romulus, he Remus; we are bred

To peasant industry and mountain sport,—

Woodcraft of spear and line,—our flocks were
spread

By winding Tiber, till your cattle thieves

Drove them toward Tusculum.

KING

No more of that!

Let the accusers speak.

AUFIDIUS.

Seven of our men

Returning from a Fair at Ostia,

Driving their cattle lawfully along,

Were set upon by these two miscreants,—

The last of many onslaughts on our trade,—

And done to death.

[*The* QUEEN *has taken her place by the*
KING'S *elbow.*

ROMULUS AND REMUS

KING.

Ye shall have justice, justice.
Captain, immure these peasants in the Quarry
And have them slain at sundown.

QUEEN. [*Aside to the KING.*]

O my Lord
Look what you do. The striplings are no carles:
They wear their rags with royal dignity.
Mark them, my Lord.

ROMULUS.

So this is Alban justice!
Rendered by whom? A robber, cut-throat King
That cast his rightful-titled brother out.
Usurping King, thou dar'st not strangle us!
A god protects us, who it is I know not:
But some potential lightning from on high
Will smite thee soon. Thy brother, Numitor,
Knocks at the Sabine gate.

[NUMITOR rises.]

KING.

Remove them, guard.

QUEEN.

Husband, reverse thy word,
Dost thou remember Rhea Sylvia?
Her eyes are copied in that stripling's look.
The other is an image of you all,—
A royal gallery. Forbear, my lord,
Lest through some juggling infamy of Fate
You kill your flesh and blood.
The serpent's sickness—the Tiberian eagles—
And something more,—See there!

[*Pointing to NUMITOR, who is standing in
an attitude of accusing majesty, holding*

ROMULUS AND REMUS

*his staff like a sceptre. His cape, as he
throws it back from his head, shows a
purple lining.*

KING. [*To NUMITOR.*]

How came you in? The city gates are closed.

NUMITOR.

Yet Jove walks through them.

KING.

Can a phantom speak?

'Tis terror plants this spectre in mine eye.

I'll not be scared. Unreal and shallow ghosts

Through whom the daylight passes haunt our minds,

Rise in our path, enact forgotten scenes,

And tinge some word or trivial accident

With the unknown.

QUEEN.

Why do you mutter thus

And knit your brows? Husband, it is the beggar.

KING. [*To NUMITOR.*]

Beggar or King, who art thou?

NUMITOR.

Numitor!

Thy banished brother, Alba's rightful Lord.

'Tis twenty years since the December night

When thou didst cause my palace to be burned,

Me banished, and my daughter, Rhea Sylvia,

The Vestal Virgin, to be close immured

And buried from the light. My child was lost.

Never since then have I had sight of her

Though searching all the crannies of the world.

Speak, falling tyrant, what befell the maid?

[*Enter at the back FAUSTULUS and ACCA.*]

ROMULUS AND REMUS

For never shall this body know repose
Till I have found my Rhea Sylvia.

FAUSTULUS and ACCA. [*Chanting.*]

Guardian of the Sacred Flame,
Rhea Sylvia is her name.
Daughter of an Alban King
From whom the Roman state shall spring.

NUMITOR.

How hit these chanters on my daughter's fate?
Who art thou, little mother? Are ye priests
Or servants to some rustic deity
Whose ditties hymn the name that I have lost?

ACCA.

We are two peasants visited of Mars
Who gave us noble boys for foster sons,
Mooring his offspring by the Tiber's ebb,
And nursing them with his divine she-wolf
Till Faustulus and Acca took them in.
Here are their proofs of royal ancestry
Which, like the lads themselves, are kingly gems
Worn for too long upon a peasant's breast.

[*She shows the child's garments and trinkets.*]

ROMULUS.

Mother, I need no nobler blood than thou.

REMUS.

Mother, nor I.

NUMITOR.

Behold the pearls that on my Rhea's brow
Reflected Vesta's flame. The goddess now
Returns the scattered jewels to the crown,

ROMULUS AND REMUS

Steeping our royal house in new renown.
Strange things are brought to light; our darkest
aim

Time hallows in its sacrificial flame
And Jove subdues us.

[*To AMULIUS.*]

Brother, stretch thy hand!

These twain,

[*Pointing to ROMULUS and REMUS.*]

Not you nor I, shall rule the land.

KING.

I do submit; the plan that Jove contrives
Glow's visibly around our linkèd lives.
Half of great mysteries I darkly see;
Time, thought and peace shall show the rest to
me.

FAUSTULUS.

I saw bright-hammered Mars
Bend o'er their cradle: now I hear his step,
As when he breaks the ranks of serried war.

[*Enter MARS. All fall on their knees except
ACCA and FAUSTULUS.*]

MARS.

Parents of Rome, Acca and Faustulus,
Out of whose cabin flows the Latin stream
That laves the later nations of the world,—
Mars with the stubborn hand of war doth write
Your lowly names on Rome's great title-page.
Live with his sons in memory! Martial Rome,
The hope, the fate, the splendor of the world
Begins to-morrow, when my Romulus
Choosing a spot beside the Tiber's reeds,
Shall turn the furrow with his shining plow.

CURTAIN

THE END





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